

Team Development in Objective Force Logistics

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THERE CAN BE NO revolution in military affairs without a revolution in military logistics.”¹ This statement by then Army Chief of Staff General Dennis J. Reimer set the stage for sweeping changes in Army logistics. These changes incorporate information technology (IT) enablers, changes in force structure, and changes in support relationships in combat service support (CSS). The desired end state is focused logistics, which is fusing logistics information and transportation technologies to achieve the level of agility and flexibility necessary to support combat forces throughout military operations.² The changes required to achieve focused logistics—leveraging IT, changing force structure, and changing support relationships—are incorporated into the logistics paradigm of the Army’s Objective Force.

Research indicates that leaders and force developers have not addressed how the Objective Force CSS model will affect some aspects of leadership, specifically, the team development process. Teams at every level execute CSS operations that support fighting units. Identifying the adverse impacts of the Objective Force CSS model on team development may help the Army eliminate problems before implementing Objective Force logistics systems.

The Objective Force CSS structure will negatively impact team development. The negative impacts of Objective Force CSS structure, support concepts, and IT on team development could be negated by leveraging the potential of technology inherent in IT enablers to develop teams. Leaders and combat developers should incorporate technology to enhance leadership.

This article evaluates the effects Objective Force logistics concepts have on team development and explains the stages of team development and the Objective Force CSS model. It then analyzes the impact of Objective Force CSS concepts, structure, and IT on team development. It will also present ideas on how technology may be used to enhance

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the team development process. These ideas do not suggest literal implementation; they are forward-thinking ideas intended to generate Army leaders’ and combat developers’ thought and analysis.

Three Team Development Stages

In a military setting, the team development process can be initiated through new personnel or new leaders arriving, changes in task organization, or changes in team dynamics. Based on these events, units at every level will at some time negotiate the stages of team development. Teams do not achieve their optimum level of output or performance until the final stage of team development; the preceding stages are social overhead and are a required cost for reaching the optimum level of performance.³ Although the military chain-of-command structure alleviates much of the social overhead associated with the team development process, it is still important to understand the process and to recognize its progression as units work through mission problems. Negotiating these development stages quickly will allow organizations to perform at an optimal level quickly.

In U.S. Army Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*, the Army model for team development has three stages—formation, enrichment, and sustainment.⁴ Howard Tuckman developed a civilian model of team development that roughly equates to the Army model, but Tuckman’s model

includes four stages of team development. The formation stage of the Army model equates to the formation and conflict stages of Tuckman's model. There is no conflict in the Army model, possibly because a strong military chain of command may alleviate conflict. The enrichment stage is equivalent to Tuckman's cohesion stage. Sustainment is the equivalent of the functional role relatedness stage in Tuckman's model. This article addresses both models because the Army model describes leaders' and subordinates' activities during team development; it does not discuss the characteristics of the stages. The Tuckman model discusses team members' activities and clearly describes the characteristics of each stage.

Stage one—formation—occurs when the team or mission unit is assembled and authority, responsibility, and resources for the mission are received. This stage is commonly referred to as "forming." Politeness among members, concern about the mission's ambiguity, and team members and leaders feeling out other team members occurs at this stage.⁵ Critical tasks for new leaders in this phase include communicating effectively, learning standards, and providing stability for the team. Critical tasks for subordinates include gaining acceptance into the team and getting to know other team members.⁶ Conflict may also occur during the formation stage. Conflict is not addressed in the Army model, but it is present in Army teams. Weak leaders, strong peer leaders, or the presence of cliques may produce conflict during the team development process.

In Tuckman's model, the intragroup conflict stage is referred to as "storming." Lack of unity is its primary characteristic.⁷ Resistance to authority or to team members may be overt, covert, or passive-aggressive. Typical behavior may include power struggles, questioning the mission's validity, undermining the military chain of command, and criticizing the leader and his plan. This is normal behavior as team members express their individuality and their desire to impact the team. As leaders and soldiers come to understand the mission, internalize the commander's intent, and set priorities, they develop their own perceptions of the terms of the mission, which are often contrary to other team members' plans.

Stage two—enrichment—occurs when the team works together cohesively. In Tuckman's model, the group cohesion stage is referred to as "norming." During enrichment, team members accept other members and the authority or legitimacy of the leader and the mission. The team develops a common perception of its performance standards, how performance is assessed, and who assesses

it. Teams are most effective when the group as a whole assesses performance rather than when the leader assesses performance. Stage two leads to establishing roles and responsibilities. Team members normally gravitate toward their areas of expertise. As team members become more

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comfortable, they establish interpersonal relationships with other team members and the team leader.⁸ Critical leader tasks include establishing authority, communicating unit goals, and building unit pride. Critical follower tasks are developing trust and accepting unit idiosyncrasies.⁹

Stage three—sustainment—occurs when the group becomes productive. The Tuckman model refers to the sustainment stage as "performing." All team members know their roles, performance standards, other team members' idiosyncrasies, how performance will be assessed, and who will assess it. Members' roles enhance the group's activities. The energy expended on the other stages focuses on productivity; hence, the unit achieves maximum output.¹⁰ Critical leader tasks are keeping team members engaged in their tasks and maintaining team dynamics. Subordinates will assist other team members, develop shared value systems, and maintain the rest of the team's trust and confidence.¹¹

Combat Units

The Objective Force is designed around units of employment (UE) and units of action (UA). UEs are command and control structures that synchronize and coordinate battle operating systems to allow UAs to perform their missions. A UE is analogous to a division in today's Army. A UA is analogous to a maneuver brigade in today's Army; brigades are the units of choice for tactical missions immediately on entering a theater and in fluid situations. UAs are employed to achieve their assigned objectives throughout military operations. The success of these units on

the battlefield is predicated on assuming that these units will be able to “see first, understand first, act first, and finish decisively”; these organizations have robust command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to ensure this happens.¹² Battalions within the UA are combined arms battalions that coordinate small fighting units’ actions into collective actions or dispersed separate actions.¹³

CSS Forces

The UA’s design and organization greatly reduce the need for logistics support. UAs are specifically designed and equipped to perform 72 hours of high operational tempo combat without logistics support, except for force health protection. Ultrareliable equipment, commonality among equipment components, and energy efficiency will enhance the UA’s ability to operate without logistics support. UA and UE commanders will design battle rhythm to provide logistics to tactical units during sustainment pauses. UE commanders will rotate UAs to mission staging sites (MSSs) where Objective Force CSS units, called maneuver support commands (MASCOMs), will link up with a UA to provide critical CSS. The MASCOM may be required to project CSS forces up to 1,000 kilometers into the battlespace to establish the MSS. Force health protection is the only CSS function that is organic to the UA.

Sustainment pauses may appear in the form of mission staging operations and pulse operations. Mission staging operations are deliberate, intensive logistics pauses that take place while a UA prepares for shaping or decisive operations. Pulse operations are preplanned pauses in the battle rhythm that allow combat forces to replenish routinely. Pulse operations include movement from the decisive operations zone to mission staging operations and redeployment to the decisive operations zone.

Support Concept Changes

The Objective Force logistics model eliminates the task and procedures paradigm of today’s Army in favor of a skill-based and knowledge-based Army. To accomplish this, Objective Forces will rely heavily on CSS IT enablers. These enablers will greatly increase the amount of CSS information available to CSS and maneuver unit commanders, but they will also reduce the amount of human interaction between supporter and supported, and among mutually supporting CSS units.

The IT enablers required for the Objective Force CSS model will leverage technology to allow strategic and national logistics providers to reach into the battlespace to assist CSS to the UA. Even today

we see the integration of strategic and national-level providers reaching into theaters of operations with the U.S. Army Materiel Command forward concept and the Defense Logistics Agency’s Logistics Assistance Office Program. These national-level capabilities will be critical in a theater of operations in the Objective Force CSS model.

The Objective Force logistics model eliminates the habitual support relationship between supported and supporting units, and among mutually supporting logistics units. Objective Force logisticians will task organize their MASCOMs to provide class I, II, III(P), III(B), IV, V, VII, and IX supply support; food service; water support; and programmed and unprogrammed maintenance support. MASCOMs are modular and tailored to the type of support required at the MSS. Depending on task organization, situation, or mission, the composition of the MASCOM providing support at the MSS may change to meet the MSS support requirement.

Analysis

The Objective Force CSS structure will negatively impact team development. Modularity and eliminating habitual support relationships cause teams to negotiate the team development stages every time there is a change in task organization, mission, or logistics requirement in the MASCOM. Eliminating habitual support relationships will mean the mandate for Army units to train as combined arms teams no longer applies to CSS units.

The Objective Force support concept changes will impact team development negatively. Changing from a task- and procedures-based CSS force to a knowledge-based force while eliminating habitual support will hinder the team development process. When leaders put soldiers together who have not worked together before, there must be a common frame of reference; units now use tasks and procedures to ensure continuity. Skills and knowledge are excellent tools when units operate together for a long time as they do in a habitual support relationship. Eliminating common tasks and procedures will extend the duration of the team development formation stage.

IT enablers of any type that reduce or eliminate human interaction hinder team development. Software applications with their readily available information have removed the human element from CSS operations. Leaders are beginning to rely on computer information for logistics status instead of talking to unit commanders. This effect will increase as the Army relies on information systems instead of people, impacting team development by reducing human interaction among CSS elements. There are no “bubble charts” for

uncertainty, conflict, morale, teamwork, cohesiveness, or productivity. These are the essential human qualities teams experience during the development process; electrons will not experience these qualities.

Recommendations and Concepts to Explore

There is potential for a leadership module in Objective Force IT enablers. Perhaps a change in task organization initiated or forecasted by IT systems could automatically download the moving unit's current tactical standing operating procedures, current supply status, current operations, and projected operation orders for the gaining unit. Automatically transmitting this information through a tactical-level command and control system for CSS would alleviate some social overhead incurred during stages one and two of team development. Civilian entrepreneurs are developing software and web-based technology designed specifically to enhance team development that has military application.¹⁴ The Army is also currently researching how information and media can physiologically affect the human brain.¹⁵ There is potential for developing software that can automatically provide enough information to leaders to completely eliminate the task orientation stage of team development.

Applying biofeedback, Bluetooth technology, and proximity technology could enhance the chain of command's ability to monitor team development. Biofeedback is results gathered from monitoring physiological and neurological changes in individuals by attaching monitoring equipment to their bodies. Bluetooth technology is short-range, radio-based technology that can connect many electronic devices, including per-

sonal computers, organizers, and applications of cellular or satellite-based technology.¹⁶ Proximity technology tracks individual movements through cellular or satellite-based technology.¹⁷

Using miniaturized biofeedback could help team leaders identify stress levels, aggression levels, and job satisfaction levels by monitoring physiological and neurological reactions to mission changes.¹⁸ In conjunction with biofeedback, proximity detection could be used to determine stress levels when the team is together and when certain individuals are together. These applications, along with Bluetooth technology and proximity technology, could give CSS leaders consistent input on team members' mental and physiological states. Proximity technology could be used to determine how long teams have worked together. Perhaps leaders and combat developers should explore these technological advances to determine if they could enhance leaders' ability to monitor team development in CSS units.

The negative impacts of Objective Force CSS structure, support concepts, and IT on team development could be negated by leveraging the potential of technology inherent in IT enablers to develop teams. Now is the time to incorporate the capabilities presented in this article into Objective Force systems, at least conceptually. Leaders and combat developers should incorporate technology to enhance leadership. Reserving space to implement these concepts in Objective Force CSS structure, concepts, and IT will allow integration of emerging technology when said technology has reached its pinnacle or when it becomes cost effective. Applying this technology could result in a tactical advantage for our forces and a leadership advantage as well. **MR**

NOTES

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